

SEEKING FOR JESUS

NO. 947

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 21, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"Seeking for Jesus."
John 6:24.*

THE persons who are here described as seeking for Jesus were looking after Him from a very mean and selfish motive—not because of the gracious Words which He spoken, nor to render Him thanks for benefits received at His hands, but merely because they had eaten of the loaves and fishes, and hoped to do so again. From such sordid motives let us flee; may we all shun with detestation the very idea of making a profession of religion for the sake of worldly advantage; for it is detestable to the last degree. Those who seek Jesus Christ with the groveling desire to make a gain of godliness are hypocrites of the meanest order; like Judas they will follow the Lord while they can steal from the bag, and like that "son of perdition," they will sell Him when the 30 pieces of silver are the reward of treachery; let them know that such gain will involve their souls' eternal loss!

I shall apply the words before us to those who really and *spiritually* seek Jesus, seek Him as Jesus—the Savior who saves His people from their sins. Last Sunday morning I tried to speak concerning maturity in grace—(See #945, Volume 16—RIPE FRUIT—by the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and 574 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org) giving the advanced believer a word, and as we are bound to give a portion of meat in due season to all classes, I will now deal with those who are but babes in grace, if indeed they are babes at all. I shall speak to those who *cannot* say, "We have found Him," but who are earnestly "seeking for Jesus."

I. First, let us notice THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE described as "seeking for Jesus." In it there is a mingling of good and evil; we see in it much of the light of God, but too much of darkness; it is neither day nor night, a dim twilight, hopeful but overclouded; I may call it "not light, but darkness visible." It is one of those miry places, a marsh, not altogether sea, and certainly not land; like the brackish water of the river's mouth, not altogether salt, but assuredly not sweet.

"Seeking for Jesus" has *a large amount of hopefulness in it*; it is as the almond tree in blossom, though as yet there is no fruit. The seeker at any rate is not now indifferent; he is not a careless sluggard, demanding yet more sleep, and folding of the hands; he is not a defiant rebel, daring the Wrath of God with blasphemous audacity; he is no longer a denier of revelation; he would not be seeking for Jesus unless he had some kind of faith—at any rate, a *theoretical* faith in a Savior, and in his need of Him. Now it is a very encouraging sign when we see men awakened and willing to hear; when we can bring men to *think*, we are very grateful, for thoughtfulness lies on the road to conviction of sin, and conviction is on the way to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am glad, my dear friend, that you are now no longer deaf to the appeals of God's word; it is well that your ears are open, and though as yet what you hear is far from bringing you any comfort, rest assured it is a great blessing to you to hear the truth of God, even when it condemns you! I rejoice to see you under concern, and I hope that something may come of it.

Your face is now turned in the right direction, now that you are "seeking for Jesus." When you sought sinful pleasure, you were facing the pit of hell—now your face is heavenward. I am glad that Jesus is the objective of your search, for depend upon it, nothing else is worth seeking for; salvation from sin and hell should be the first objective of your soul's desire. For an alarmed and awakened sinner to seek rest in *ceremonies* will be a search for bread among ashes; to labor for salvation by your own righteousness will be looking for substance among dreams; your seeking after Jesus shows that you are on the right tack, and though as yet you have not reached the haven, the helm is set in the right direction, and I am grateful to God for it, and encouraged concerning you; I regard your present state as the little cloud which foretells the coming rain. But, alas, I may be disappointed, and the early cloud may melt into nothingness! Hope tells a flattering tale, but she may be deceived. What a pleasing sight it is to see a man who has formerly been prayerless casting himself upon his knees in secret! How gratifying to see

the unread Bible brought out from the dust, and carefully studied! I think an angel must look on with holy interest when he sees the fresh tear fall in the solitary chamber, and the unaccustomed suppliant bow before his God; glad are those blessed spirits when they hear the seeker say, “O God, I will seek You until I find You; I will cry unto You till I receive an answer of peace.” Intelligence of such a vow would make a church rejoice in hope—trusting that the time for newborn children of God to be found in her midst was fully come! A heart that turns itself to Christ, if haply it may find Him, is evidently in a hopeful condition.

Yet in the state of “seeking for Jesus” *there is much that is doubtful*, for, my brothers and sisters, the seeker after Christ remains disobedient to the great command of the gospel. If he were obedient to the great gospel precept, he would at once cease to be a seeker, and become a happy *finder*! What is the command of the gospel? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Properly speaking, Christ is not an object for *seeking*, He is not far from any of us—like the bronze serpent uplifted by Moses, He is not so much to be looked *for* as looked *at*. We have neither to clamber to heaven to find Him in the loftiness of His Deity, to bring Him down, nor dive into the chambers of Hades to bring Him up again from the dead. Thus says the Lord, “The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Jesus is Immanuel, God with us! A prayer will reach Him, a wish will find Him, a groan will pierce His heart—do but confide in Him, and He is yours! The first command of the gospel to guilty sinners is not to pray, to search the Scriptures, to attend upon sermons—all these are natural duties, and woe unto the man who neglects any of them; but the command, the special command of the gospel is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!” Now, the seeking sinner is disobedient to the command; he is going about here and there seeking, but he declines *trusting*. He is eagerly looking abroad for that which is at home; he is seeking for peace afar off when it is near him; he looks east and west to behold a wonder, while the wonderful, the Savior, stands at his right hand ready to forgive! The way of salvation for me as a sinner is simply this, that I, being a sinner, do now put my trust in Christ Jesus the substitute for sinners! God has set forth His crucified Son as the accepted propitiation for sin—the way of salvation is that I accept Him for what God has set Him forth—namely, as the atonement for my sin, in which I place my sole reliance. Seeing He is God, seeing He took upon Himself the nature of man, seeing that as mediator He suffered in the place of as many as trust in Him, I trust Him, and I obtain thereby the blessed result of His sufferings—I am, in fact, thereby saved! Now, it is certainly some good thing to be a seeker, but it is also an ill thing if I follow my seeking, and refuse God’s way of salvation. Hear what the Apostle John says—“He who believes not God has made Him a liar because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.” This is no small sin to be guilty of, and it entails no small punishment, for “he who believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” Suppose that I have been told of a remedy for my disease; well, it is very good that I desire to be cured of my deadly malady; it is so far hopeful that I have sent for a physician, but after being informed that there is only one specific remedy for my disease, and that it alone will certainly heal me, if I were still to continue seeking a remedy, or to say I am seeking this one *true* remedy, I shall remain sick, and ultimately die! I shall never be healed unless I take that which is prescribed—to *seek* it is not enough, I must actually take it! In seeking, then, there is some good, but oh, how much of evil! Here are gleams and flashes of the light of God, but oh, how dense is the darkness! Here is a little smoke in the flax, but I dare scarcely call it a spark. O seekers of Jesus think of this, for while I would not discourage you, yet would I encourage you to end your seeking by becoming a believer! Look not at salvation’s cup, but *drink* of it! Stand not by the fountain’s brim, but *wash* in it and be clean! O may the Holy Spirit lead you to cease your search for goodly pearls, for the pearl of great price is before you! Jesus is not to be discovered as a secret; He stands before you openly; behold His hands and His feet! Mark well His torn side, and as you look, trust, and from now on He is all your own!

Hear, dear friend, your true position. It is the case of a soldier on the battlefield, wounded, bleeding, life oozing away from him; he is perishing, but he is sufficiently sensible to know it, and to call for help. The surgeon is on the field within hearing; the sufferer pleads for relief with many cries and entreaties; so far, so good, but I pray you remember that crying and weeping will not of themselves heal the sick man—the surgeon must actually come and bind up his wounds; and if he refuses to receive him, he may cry as he will, but he will bleed to death. So remember that your prayers and seeking, of themselves, cannot save you—*Jesus* must come to you, and it is madness on your part to refuse Him by your unbe-

lief! To give another similitude—you are today like the manslayer of old; you have done the murderous deed; vengeance is armed against you; judgment, swift as lightning pursues you! You are not now slumbering in foolish security, or presumptuously defying the avenger, but happily you are so awakened, that you are running towards the city of refuge. I delight to mark your earnest running, but run as you may, you are not safe until you are within the city gate! The most vigorous running will not save you if it does not end within the walls of refuge. To enter that open gate, to dwell within that sheltering wall, to enjoy the privilege of sanctuary—this is safety; all else is but hope of escape, and not deliverance itself. To pray, to hear, to desire, to *seek*—all this is the roadway and the running, but Christ Himself must be laid hold upon by *faith*, or we are not saved! Run, man, but oh, take care that you run in God's way—by faith in Jesus—and not by trusting in your resolves and feelings! You must have Christ to be yours by personal faith, or you must die eternally. Let me give yet another picture. You are like one who has been asleep in a burning house. At last you are awakened; the cries of those who would gladly save you have broken your deadly slumber; you start up in horror. I think I see you now at the upper window, with the flames drawing near to you; you clearly perceive your danger, you passionately clamor for aid; all your energies are on edge; so far, so good. But, man, all this will not rescue you—you must get on the fire escape which is now uplifted to the window! Are you unwilling to take the one and only way of escape? It is close to you; it is suitable, it is efficient! Why seek another? There it is, and precisely what you need! Your present alarm will only be the prelude of your despair if you put from you the way of escape. I put these figures before you that you may see that while you are only *seeking* for Jesus, your best friends dare not altogether hope for you, but are led to tremble, too! We wonder which way the scale will turn—your future quivers in the balances. As anxious eyes watch a laboring boat making with difficulty for port, and in imminent danger of the rocks, so we watch you; we see you like Lot and his family, ready to leave the city of destruction, but you have not yet reached the mountains, and our heart asks concerning you, “Will he linger in the plain? Will he look back? Or will he altogether be delivered?” If you remain as you are, there is no hope for you; all the supposed good which is now in you is vanity itself if it leaves you short of Christ! Remember well this verse, and I will pass on—

“Why those fears, poor seeking sinner?

Why those anxious, gloomy fears?

Sighs and sorrows cannot save you,

Healing dwells not in your tears;

It is BELIEVING

Which the soul to Christ endears.”

II. The second part of our discourse shall deal with THE PERPLEXITIES OF THIS STATE.

“Seeking for Jesus” is a state of heart in which the poor soul is usually very much put to it—“tumbled up and down in his thoughts,” as John Bunyan would say. For first, seekers are very often much perplexed as the result of *their ignorance* of the way of salvation. Too often, awakened souls, though they may have heard the gospel, do not in their hearts understand it; many inquirers do not know what faith is; I am persuaded millions of our fellow countrymen do not know what believing in Jesus means. Though every Sunday they are told, yet they do not catch the thought, for the Spirit of God has not illuminated their minds! To believe in Jesus, as we say again, and again, and again, is simply to *trust* in Jesus—to take God at His word—to take Christ for what God says He is, namely, the atonement, the satisfaction for sin, the Savior of sinners. But poor, troubled consciences think faith is a deep mystery, and they go about like blind men groping for the wall; they wander like travelers in a dense fog, not knowing which way leads to their homes—hoping, but hoping against hope, by reason of ignorance. Many, though desirous to be saved, do not understand the work of Christ, or know what atonement is. Though the doctrine of substitution, which is the very marrow of the gospel, is to believers so very plain, yet many seekers have not learned it. That Jesus bore the sin of His people—that “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”; that He was made sin for us; that justice received its due at His hands; these precious facts many penitent sinners have not grasped. They still think there is so much *repentance* to do, so much *feeling* to endure, so much *praying* to go through, so much *mystery* to be experienced, but the plain, simple precept, “Believe and live,” trust and be accepted, hide under the shadow of the cross and be safe—this, through ignorance, they do not understand, and this involves them in trouble upon trouble, till their way is hedged up with thorns.

At such times, too, to increase their perplexity, they are usually *distracted with fear*. Persons in a panic act generally in the worst conceivable manner for their own safety, and an awakened sinner is in

much the same condition. A terrible sound is in his ears—he hears the rumbling of the everlasting tempest, he sees the gathering storm; he knows not what to do, nor where to flee; his sins, which once appeared such trifles, now rise before him like mountains of blackness! The wrath of God, which once he defied, makes him exceedingly fear and quake; he sees the dark record of his transgressions, and anticipates the hour when all his sins shall be read before the assembled universe, and the sentence of wrath shall go forth against him! To where shall he flee? He scarcely knows how or where. A spirit distracted with dread is never a wise spirit, and often is goaded on to madness; pressed out of measure with forebodings of heart, and threats of conscience, many a man refusing to believe in Jesus has laid violent hands upon himself. Do you wonder then, that souls under a sense of sin, and fear of wrath, are far from being cool and collected, but rather are like mariners in a storm who “reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man”? How soon would their bewilderment end in sweet repose if they would obey the divine mandate, and accept the great salvation!

During these struggles for life, the mind is usually *harassed with a thousand questions*. The newly-awakened mind is very apt to lose itself in the many spiritual problems which lie before it. The man cared nothing for these matters before, but now he has even a morbid craving after knowledge! He seems as if he could not learn too much or too fast. How many an inquirer, instead of turning to the cross, worries with intricacies of doctrine, vexed points which belong to metaphysics rather than to divinity! They are fascinated by the “things hard to be understood,” and forget the truths of God which a wayfaring man, though a fool, may readily comprehend; how many ask themselves, “Are we elect?” when their inquiry should be, “How can a man be cleansed from iniquity?” In truth, they must learn Latin and Greek before they know their letters, and must fathom the doctrine of election before they will believe in the redemption of Jesus; they would come to the Father before they have come to the Son, and learn their predestination before their pardon; that which has perplexed the wisest of men, namely, how to reconcile divine ordination with the free agency of man, they attempt to grapple with while they are in danger of the unquenchable fire! They philosophize at hell’s mouth, and debate in the jaws of perdition! You may show them how absurd it is, as absurd as a drowning man to wish to quibble about hydraulics, and refuse to lay hold on the friendly rope until he understands some mystery in hydrostatics; or, as if a person sorely sick refused all surgery until he understood anatomy, and comprehended the secret influences of drugs upon the many parts of the body. Yet some inquirers will abide in this folly. I do not wonder at it, when I remember how foolish man is by nature; men who have left the whole spiritual realms untrod are very apt, when they see it open up suddenly before their eyes, to aspire in their hearts’ pride to stand upon its loftiest peaks, to climb its Himalayas, to swim its Bosphorus, to fathom its Atlantic, and from this cause they forget its green pastures and still waters! I would have every convicted sinner here listen to my words this morning: friend, you have to do with the plain truth of the gospel, namely this, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners”—sinners such as you are, and faith links you to that Savior; when you have learned that lesson, then you shall discover that God has chosen you from the beginning, that He has ordained you unto eternal life, but as yet you cannot solve that matter. Leave that glorious doctrine till first your soul is saved by faith in Jesus Christ. It is plain, however, that this appetite for strong meat takes off the babe from the unadulterated milk of the word; these questions help to confuse, trouble, worry, and distract the seeker for Jesus.

At this hour, too, to make confusion more confounded, Satan is quite sure to assail the soul with his diabolical insinuations and suggestions, with strong temptations, and despairing thoughts. No king will willingly lose his subjects, and Satan, when he sees his captives about to turn runaways, sets extra guards around them! He will set others on to tempt them, or he will come himself personally, and inject into the soul the most horrible thoughts, the most blasphemous suggestions, and the most despairing forebodings that can be conceived of! Having felt this, I speak tenderly to such as may now be exercised with them; marvel not at them, neither be dismayed. If you can, by the Holy Spirit’s help, resist Satan—he will flee from you. If you can assail him with, “it is written,” he will leave you; but be not astonished if now, for a while, the fiery darts fly thick as hail; he has his military from which he can vomit ten thousand shots at once upon a poor lost soul, and make it feel as though it were broken in pieces all asunder with horror and dismay! You will triumph over him yet if you believe—the Lord will bruise Satan under your feet shortly; be of good courage! Though you fall, you shall rise again! Faith will lift you up in the power of Jesus. I marvel not that when that dog of hell howls in your ears, your spirit is sorely put to it for comfort.

It may be also that when the soul is seeking for Jesus, it is at the same time *much grieved to find it cannot even now cease from sin*. “My old sins,” says the heart, “I would be rid of them, but how can I hope for forgiveness, for I have sinned this very day? I went to my chamber, and I bowed my knee, and said, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ And I came downstairs resolved to be watchful, but something vexed me, and I spoke unadvisedly; how can I think God will have mercy on me?” Or says another, “I was seeking the Savior this morning, but I went out to my business, and I met with worldly company, and I forgot my Lord—I am afraid I mingled with them so closely as to participate in their sinful mirth, and now how can the Lord have any pity upon such a hypocritical seeker as I have been?” As if that poor heart expected to be perfect before it had even found pardon! As if a patient expected to be perfectly well before he had followed the advice of his physician! My dear hearer, if you were able to cease from all sin for a single day, I am sure you would be out of place on earth, for heaven is the place for perfect people, and not this sinful earth! If a fountain sent forth nothing but pure water for one whole day, we might conclude that it was completely purified; the bearing of good fruit for one season would prove the tree to be good; if your heart abstained from sin of itself throughout one day, it might for another, and so on forever, and where would be the need of a Savior? What? Do you not know that Christ came to save you from your *new* sins as well as from your *old* transgressions? Is His arm too short to reach your daily needs; His blood of too little power to wash away your fresh pollutions? Have you still some hope of bettering *yourself*? Have done with this trifling! Confess yourself a helpless sinner, shaped in iniquity, conceived in sin, depraved in heart, and therefore needing the never-ceasing mercy of the Lord your God! Come, wash now in the Fountain filled with blood, and if sin returns, ask Jesus to wash your feet again! Make Jesus your sole reliance. Cry to Him, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean! Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow!” Nothing else can end your perplexities; you cannot untie the Gordian knot of your difficulties! Cut it, then, by leaving all to Jesus! You cannot overcome your sins except by the blood of the Lamb; you cannot be what you should be, nor what you would be, except by taking Jesus to be your all in all. Here is a song for you—

*“At last I admit it cannot be
That I should fit myself for Thee;
Here, then, to You I all resign;
Yours is the work, and only Thine.
What shall I say Your grace to move?
I give up every plea beside,
Lord I am sin, but You are love—
Lord, I am lost—but You have died!”*

III. And now, in the third place, let me warn you of THE DANGERS OF THE STATE of “seeking for Jesus.”

I have already told you that there is much of hopefulness, but there is much of peril in your condition. Dear seeker, what a sad thing it is that you should be wasting so much time, and losing so much comfort by this long-continued seeking, when it might all end so happily even now at this present hour! Had you believed in Jesus at the very first, you had had the light of God at once; how often would He have gathered you, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not! If you will trust Him now, the day star shall shine in your heart. You are like Hopeful and Christian in Giant Despair’s Castle; they lamented and bemoaned their common sorrow, and planned many unavailable methods of escape, but at last Christian, as one half-amazed, broke out into this passionate speech—“What a fool,” he said, “am I to lie in this stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.” Then said Hopeful, “That’s good news, good brother; pluck it out of your bosom, and try.” My awakened hearer, this is your condition! You have in your bosom, and you have in God’s word that which will unlock every door in your prison! Up, man, and try it now! Can you not believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that God has sent Jesus to bear your sin? Can you not trust in Him? If you can, you are free—your sins are forgiven you—you are saved! You have, perhaps, heard the incident of a dove, pursued by a hawk, which flew into the bosom of a man who was walking in the fields. And you remember that it was safely protected by him whom it had trusted; the dove would not of itself have flown there, but under the terror of the hawk it sought a shelter. You have been afraid of Jesus; you have thought He would not receive you, but now that hell pursues you, be venturesome, and fly to Him! Say as our hymn puts it—

“I can but perish if I go!”

*I am resolved to try.
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die."*

If Christ stood with a drawn sword in His hand, you had better run on the point of His sword than perish without Him. O come to Him, driven by desperation itself, if by nothing else—come into His bosom, and you shall have peace at once! But all the while you remain seeking, I know not in what distracted manner you are wasting time, you are missing comfort, you are losing opportunities of happiness. Cease your seeking, for there is the Man whom you seek; He stands revealed before you; reach here your finger and put it into the print of the nails. Or if that is too bold, touch but the hem of His garment, and you shall be made whole!

Another evil is not only the losing present peace and comfort, but the danger of being driven to despair. I do not doubt that some persons who were once sincere but unrenewed seekers, have now given up all thought of seeking Christ, because they continued to seek when He was near them, to look *for* Him instead of looking *to* Him; and they have waited so long in prayer, and Bible reading, and so on, that now they utterly despair, and give all up as hopeless! It is no wonder; if you will try to do a thing in a wrong way, you cannot hope to succeed; if a man will not plow and sow, neither shall he reap. If you will not believe, neither shall you be established! A person may be very industrious indeed, in what he does, but if he follows a method which never can produce the result he desires, he must not be surprised when he is disappointed! You are a seeker, and I am glad you are, but if you will not put your trust in Jesus, and lay your burden down at the cross where He offered the great sacrifice, it is no marvel if you continue to seek in vain! It will be a great sorrow, but it will not be a great wonder, if you become at last despairing, and are shut up in the iron cage. O man, O woman, break away from this! May God's Holy Spirit come to your rescue now! Give up your own ideas of how to get peace; take God's method of salvation, and lay hold on eternal life by trusting in the slain Savior.

Another danger is that in some cases seeking at length dies out in indifference. Having sought after a fashion by prayer, and failing to find peace at once, temptations to go back to the world's pleasure attack the soul, and too often it becomes from then on, impervious to exhortations and expostulations. The unbroken, unrenewed heart grows sullen, and declares, "I tried, but I did not succeed; I may as well have what pleasure I can have, for spiritual joys are denied me; if the world to come cannot be mine, I will have this world, and take my fill of it." I pray you may never be driven to that, but my fear is that if you tarry long in this border land, seeking, but yet halting between two opinions, undecided and unbelieving—at last you *will* relapse into your former state of spiritual slumber, and your last end will be worse than the first!

Another danger is lest you should take up with something short of Jesus Christ. I have known persons who have been content to remain seekers all their days; they have felt comforted by the thought that they are seekers! Now, such comfort is daubing with untempered mortar; a man out of employment has been walking up and down the London streets to find something to do; his family is in need, and he must find a job; he is quite right to seek, but he will not be satisfied with seeking—he needs to *find*! Tramping the street will not feed his children; he is not content with having called at many shops; he will not rest till he finds what he is after—and he would be very foolish if he did. So to be a seeker after Christ, walking up and down the streets, as it were, will not fill your hungry soul; you must get Christ Himself! If any unemployed father of a family were to say, "Well, I walk about so many days in the week, and so many hours in the day, and I am quite satisfied, though I do not find anything to do," you would think him a great simpleton! And so with you; it is a good sign when there is an appetite, but a mere appetite does not satisfy a man—he must eat the food provided. Your seeking Christ will not save you, unless it leads you in very deed to *believe in Jesus*! It is an ill sign when a man says, "Well, I am doing my best; I am always at a place of worship; I am a Bible reader, I practice prayer at home, I do my best." My dear friend, if you settle down in that idea, you are self-righteous, and are off the road altogether! Besides, you are lying to your own heart, for after all you are at enmity with God, and the sign of that enmity is this—that you refuse to believe on His dear Son! If you were reconciled to God, you would love Jesus Christ, and trust in Him! I see what it is—you have resolved, after all, to be *your own savior*! You still think that there is something in outward religion to produce salvation. I solemnly assure you that if you stand out against believing in Christ; if you will not fly to those dear wounds of His; if you will not hide beneath the shelter of the atonement, you will go to hell as well from a place of worship as from the haunts of sin, and will perish as certainly with a Bible read as with a Bible burned!—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

“Oh, but,” you say, “I feel my sins so much!” Yes, but if you trust in your *feelings*, you will perish in them as much as though you wallowed in your sins! O soul, resolve with Toplady —

*“He who suffered in my place,
Shall my Physician be!
I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comforts me.”*

Never hope to be saved except by God’s way of salvation. O that the Holy Spirit would enable you in your heart to say, “Now I come to You, O Jesus! Guilty as I am, I lift my eyes to You, and this is my prayer—‘Help me for Your mercy’s sake; have pity upon me, and cleanse me in Your blood, for I put all my trust in You.’” Resolve, O seeker, to have no refuge of lies—no Savior but the Lamb of God!

I will confess to you, dear seeker, that often and often I am myself personally driven to do what I trust you may be led to do today. I look back upon my past life, and while I have much to thank God for, much in which to see His Spirit’s hand, yet when I feel my responsibilities, and my shortcomings, my heart sinks within me. When I think of my transgressions, better known to myself than to anyone else, and remember, too, that they are not known even to me as they are to God, I feel all hope swept away, and my soul left in utter despair! But by His grace I come anew to the cross, and think of who it was who died there, and why He died, and what designs of Infinite mercy are answered by His death. It is so sweet to look up to the Crucified One again, and say, “I have nothing but You, my Lord, no confidence but You; if You are not accepted as my substitute I must perish; if God’s appointed Savior is not enough I have no other, but I know You *are* the Father’s Well-Beloved, and I am accepted in You; You are all I need, and all I have.” How I desire, with intense longing, that you may do the same! It would be a blessed day for you, and for me a joyful occasion! The Jews in the present chapter asked our Savior, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” and He said, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” The *greatest* of all works; the most Godlike work, is to leave off self-righteous seeking, and trust in Jesus!

IV. Now I will conclude by delivering one or two DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE “SEEKING FOR JESUS.” Very brief shall these be.

The first direction is *give attention*, dear friend, *to the objective of faith*. The only way by which you can be saved is by faith; take that to be settled. Now, if a man says, “I cannot believe such a thing”—what then? What is his wisest course? Suppose you find a difficulty in believing a report—what do you do? Why, you consider the probabilities of it! Suppose it had been rumored that the Emperor Napoleon had shot himself; shall I believe the report? I will ask from where the rumor comes, what intelligence corroborates it, upon what authority it is stated, and soon, by that means I arrive at a conclusion whether it is probably true, or is a mere idle tale. Now if you earnestly desire to believe, faith is the Gift of God, and a work of the Spirit, but God works according to the laws of mind, and faith in Christ will most readily come to you in conformity with those laws. “Faith comes by hearing”; why by hearing? Why, because by hearing I learn the truth concerning Christ, and what I hear commends itself to my judgment and understanding, and so I come to believe! Faith comes to us by reading, which is another form of hearing; read what the Scripture has to say about the Messiah and His work, and you will be helped to believe God’s testimony, by knowing what it is, and on what Authority it comes to you. Let your hearing and your reading be accompanied with meditation—like the Virgin Mary—ponder these things in your heart. “Incline your ear,” says the Spirit, “and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live.” Now, that inclining of the ear means a devout and diligent attention to the good news, and a weighing of it in your inmost heart. Now look at it—you have sinned, and God must punish sin; these two facts are clear enough to your conscience. Is it not a marvelous system that God should be pleased to put away sin through atonement, by laying the sin upon another, and punishing it in the person of His Son? Do you know of any other system that would meet the case so well, that would be so suitable to you? I believe that the authenticity of Scripture is better proved by the very existence of this doctrine than by anything else—for no human mind could ever have contrived or conceived of a way so just to God—and yet so infinitely gracious! I feel sure it is true, I am certain of it.

Then I find it promised over and over again by God Himself, that if I trust Christ, I shall have the benefit of all His work. I therefore believe the thing is reasonable, and it is proclaimed by divine authority. I have God’s promise for it; I know that the Almighty One cannot lie. I cheerfully accept what He

provides for me, and I am saved! My dear hearer, if you find it hard to believe, shut yourself up this afternoon in your room, and come not out till you have pictured to your mind's eye the everlasting God unveiling Himself of His ineffable splendors, and taking upon Himself the nature of man! Behold that glorious one nailed to Calvary's tree; forsaken of God; crying out in anguish; and dying without a friend—and all to make an atonement to the law of God! As you are fixing your eyes upon this, and bowing in humble prayer, faith will come to you; the Holy Spirit will overshadow you, and beget it in your soul—faith will drop in your soul like the dew from heaven! You will wonder to find the hardness of your heart all gone, and your unbelief all departed, and you will say, “Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief!”

Another direction however, is—take care, my dear friend, to *clear away as far as possible everything that would hinder your believing*. Now you may depend upon it that going into sin hinders believing. You cannot continue in willful sin, and yet become a believer; sin cherished in the heart is an effectual hindrance; a man cannot be tied to a post and yet run away at the same time. If you bind yourself to your sin, you cannot escape! Withdraw at once from evil company—it is a very deadly mischief to young seekers. You hear an impressive sermon, but then you go away talking with idle gossips, and you fall into frivolous chit-chat on the Sunday afternoon; you cannot expect your soul to grow in the right direction under such influences. Get on your knees, get alone, get to your God, get to Jesus Christ; this it is that will roll away the stone which blocks the door.

And, once again, do *remember that till you have believed, your danger is of the most imminent kind!* You are not in danger of something future only—you are in peril even now, for the wrath of God abides on you. You are not like a city which is to be attacked by troops yet at a distance—the Judge is even at the door; you are actually besieged. The foes have encompassed you round about; they lift the scaling ladders, they will soon scale the walls; beware, O sinner, beware! Your present state is terrible! Your future state will be hopeless! Today is the accepted time; now or never it is with some of you; now escape for your lives; now seek, but seek in the right way, by believing in Him who is the Savior of the sons of men!

How I have longed, this morning, for a tongue like the pen of a ready writer! How I have opened my mouth and panted to speak these things in passionate earnest, for I hunger for your salvation! Speak from my soul I do, but I cannot preach as I would, else would I saturate this sermon with my tears. O that the Master might bless even my weakness of speech to carry home the truth of God to your hearts and consciences! I do not like to let one of you go unless you have thought over these things, and have given your hearts to Jesus; I shall probably never address many of you again, certainly not all of you. You have come across the sea, and you are going to the ends of the earth, some of you. I speak in God's name: O now, before you have gone from under the sound of the word, now let the believing look be given—“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” It is the cry of the crucified Savior! Turn not away from that dear voice so full of anguish! Hide not your eyes from that brow still marked with the crown of thorns! Despise not those nailed hands and feet, but yield to Him as again He cries in agony of love, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” O Lord, turn them! And they shall be turned! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
PSALM 32; MATTHEW 15:21-28; LUKE 8:41-48.**

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